

# Parientes

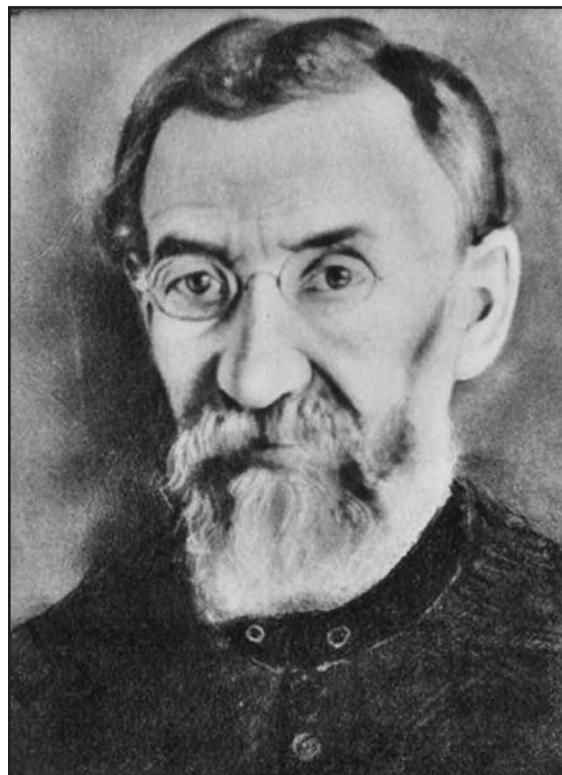
By José Antonio Esquibel

## Founders of the Villa de Santa Fe #9

**O**n a cold winter day at the end of January 1626, *maese de campo* Pedro Durán de Chaves, also known as Durán y Chaves, presented himself before officials representing the Office of the Inquisition to answer questions regarding suspect words and deeds of former governor Juan de Eulate. In his formal testimony, Durán de Chaves gave his age as 60 and his place of birth as Llerena in Castilla. With some measure of distinction, he also made it a point to have it recorded that he was a *primero fundador* of the Villa de Santa Fe.

The town of Valverde de Llerena is situated in the southeast part of the modern-day province of Badajoz, Extremadura, Spain, bordering on the province of Andalucía. Today it has a population of about 850 people. History attributes the founding of the site in the mid-13th century to Rodrigo de Valverde, a knight of the Order of Santiago. It remained under the jurisdiction of the Order of Santiago for centuries until acquiring the legal status of a *villa* in 1559, around the time that the family of Pedro Durán y Chaves lived there.

A central feature of the small town of Valverde de Llerena is the gothic style



Six generations of the Chávez family. Photos courtesy of the Mariano A. Chávez collection: Jesús María Chávez, 1831–1914.

parochial church of La Inmaculada Concepción, built in the 16th century. If the devotion to Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception was active during the time that Pedro Durán y Chaves grew up, then he would have felt a special affinity to the same devotion in the Villa de Santa Fe, since the *convento*, and presumably the church, of Santa Fe was dedicated to La Inmaculada Concepción in the 17th century.

The paternal grandparents of Pedro Durán y Chaves, Alonso García Cerrato and Isabel

Sánchez, were both born in Valverde, where they most likely married in the early half of the 1500s. There is little else known about this couple. Their son, Hernán Sánchez Rico, himself a native of Valverde, took the surname of his maternal family. It is important to point out that in the custom of 16th-century Spain, if a

person was named after a paternal grandparent, they were often given the full name of that grandparent, including the surname. Perhaps Hernán Sánchez Rico was named after his paternal or maternal grandfather.

The parents of Hernán Sánchez Rico most likely arranged his marriage to Leonor Durán. She, too, was a native of Valverde, as were both of her parents. Her father, Francisco Sánchez, worked as a *colchero* by trade, a maker of bedspreads or quilts. Leonor's mother, María Sánchez, was more commonly known as La Durana. Clearly, it was from her mother that Leonor took the Durán surname, which was eventually adopted by her son, Pedro Durán y Chaves.

Hernán Sánchez de Rico and Leonor Durán became the parents of Alonso García Cerrato, the namesake of his paternal grandfather, and Pedro Gómez, who went by a variety of surnames in his lifetime, including Gómez, Gómez Rico, Gómez Durán, Durán, and Durán y Chaves.

In 1576, Alonso García Cerrato the younger, born circa 1539, sought and was granted license to travel from Spain to Nueva España. This required a written request to royal officials in Madrid and testimony from witness who knew the petitioner and could vouch for the person both as a citizen in good standing



José Antonio Esquibel has roots in northern New Mexico and northeastern Mexico. He's the co-author of two books on genealogy.

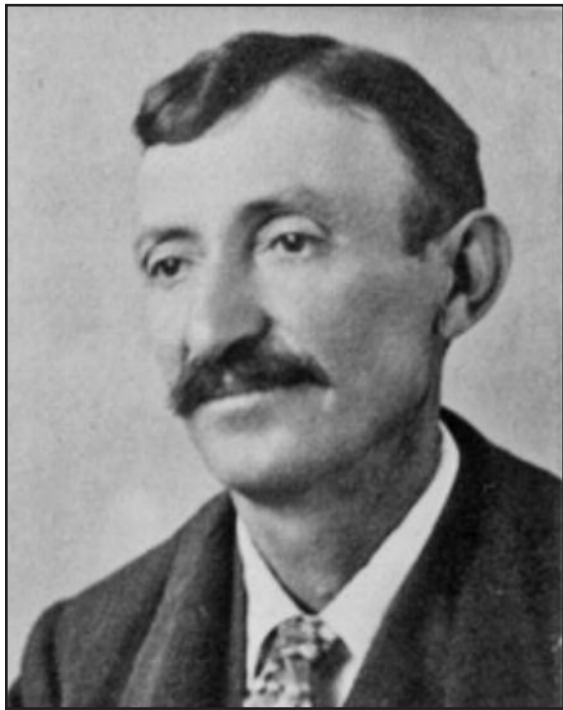
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*Mariano Aprisco Chávez, 1858–1911.*



*Mariano A. Chávez, 1896–1981.*



*Mariano Gabino Chávez, 1926–.*

and as a Christian without any parents or grandparents who converted from either the Jewish or the Islamic faith.

Traveling with Alonso García Cerrato were his wife, Catalina Cabeza, and their four children: Leonor, born circa 1565; Cristóbal, born circa 1568; Fernando, born circa 1570; and María, born circa 1574, all natives of Valverde. Catalina Cabeza, born circa 1542, was also originally from Valverde de Llerena, and the record of passage identified her parents as Valverde natives Alonso García Izquierdo and Catalina Cabeza. This family sailed from Spain across the Atlantic Ocean with the promise of new opportunities.

Pedro Durán y Chaves apparently followed his brother to Nueva España, settling in Mexico City, although no record of passage for him has yet been uncovered. By 1585 he was married to his widowed sister-in-law, Catalina Cabeza. In the following year, their daughter, Melchora Gómez, received the sacrament of baptism on February 16 at Santa Catalina Church in Mexico City. A son, Maestro Fray Bartolomé Gómez, also born in Mexico City, entered into the religious order of St. Dominic. When he applied for a position with the Office of the Inquisition in 1617, he identified his parents as Pedro Gómez Rico and Catalina Cabezas, and named his paternal grandparents as Hernán Sánchez Rico and Leonor Durán and his maternal grandparents as Alonso García Izquierdo and María Cabezas.

Pedro Durán y Chaves enlisted in 1600 as a soldier and settler bound for New Mexico with the surname of Gómez Durán. Described

as being 50 years of age (born circa 1550) and “a well-built man with good features,” he apparently was a widower by this time. Among the other recruits headed to New Mexico was the family of Mexico City residents Capt. Cristóbal Baca and Ana Ortiz, the parents of Pedro’s future bride, Doña Isabel de Bohórquez.

About 250 men, a few with wives, children and servants, came to New Mexico as soldier-settlers between 1598 and 1601. Of that number, only about 50 remained in New Mexico by 1608. Even those holdouts were on the verge of leaving New Mexico due to the challenges of sustaining themselves in a distant, harsh frontier. However, a royal decree dated June 17, 1608, ensured that New Mexico would be sustained by the royal crown for the conservation of “*nuestra Santa Fe*,” our Holy Faith, given the large number of Pueblo Indians that had received the sacrament of baptism.

The very same decree set forth a policy decision with severe repercussions for politics in New Mexico over the next seven decades. The King of Spain declared the main purpose for retaining New Mexico was “the conservation of that land and the defense of the ministers who assist in the conversion of the natives and the conservation of those already converted, and a governor and 50 tax-paying citizens [*vecinos*] will be provided with the arms necessary for the said defense.” To the leaders of the Franciscan order in Mexico City and those friars who served in New Mexico, the decree gave primacy to their

authority in New Mexico over that of a governor. This became a continual source of contention beginning in 1612 and lasting into the 1670s.

The king’s decree also called for the founding of a villa for the *vecinos* and the “planting and establishment of *nuestra Santa Fe* in a manner that the doctrine is long-lasting.” This phrase provides a clue to the christening of the new *villa* in New Mexico as the Villa de Santa Fe. The very name served as a constant reminder of the purpose decreed by the King of Spain for sustaining Spanish presence in New Mexico.

Although Pedro Durán y Chaves probably traveled back and forth between New Mexico and Mexico City, he managed to be in New Mexico for the formal founding of the Villa de Santa Fe sometime in 1610. What motivated Durán y Chaves to remain in New Mexico, a dangerous and harsh frontier, when he could have returned to live in Mexico City, which offered a measure of security and comfort? It may have been that he sought a patent of *hidalguía*, a title of the lower nobility in Spanish society that included special social privileges, which was offered to those soldiers who served for at least five years in New Mexico.

Another motivation may have been his marriage with Doña Isabel de Bohórquez, a native of Mexico City born circa 1586. He and Isabel were the parents of two known sons, Fernando Durán y Chaves (born circa 1609) and Pedro II Durán y Chaves (born circa 1611), a native of the Villa de Santa Fe.



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Miguel Mariano Chávez, 1954—.

The early years of the Villa de Santa Fe were filled with activity, especially the construction of buildings and houses, as well as tilling the land for planting crops and eventually harvesting the fruits of that labor. By 1612, the church and *convento* of the *villa* were built with assistance from Pueblo Indians. The *convento* carried the name of the familiar devotional saint of Valverde de Llerena, La Inmaculada Concepción.

The small number of Spaniards in New Mexico fostered positive relations with Pueblo Indian leaders. They were successful in forming alliances that created something of a federation of various Pueblo tribes centered on Spanish political and military leadership. Without toleration by most Pueblo Indian leaders of their presence in the region, the Spaniards would not have been able to maintain themselves as settlers and establish the Villa de Santa Fe, even with their guns, crossbows and cannons.

Pueblo Indians leaders such as Don Lorenzo, captain of the Pueblo of Pojoaque; Anda, captain of the Pueblo of San Cristóbal; and Cañasola, captain of the Pueblo of Pecos, were regarded as “friends of the Spaniards.” They saw some measure of benefit for their people and assisted in engaging more reluctant Pueblo groups as allies. Captain Pedro Durán y Chaves knew these leaders.

In time, Pedro Durán y Chaves and Doña Isabel de Bohórquez came to own land in the fertile Río Grande valley of the Río Abajo region. The Durán y Chaves *estancia* was

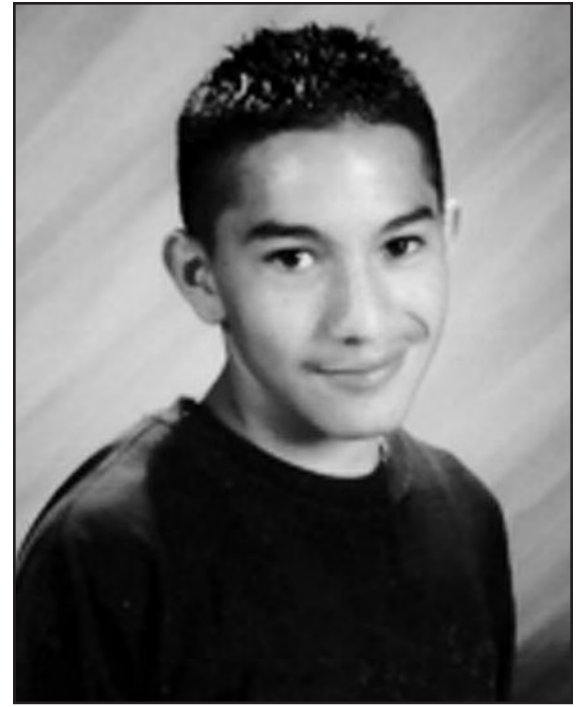
established just south of the Pueblo of Sandía. Doña Isabel came into possession of land at the Arroyo del Tunque, about 10 miles north of present-day Bernalillo. The Durán y Chaves-Bohórquez properties were passed on to the next two generations of their family before being lost as a result of the Pueblo Indian uprising of August 1680.

Pedro Durán y Chaves and his wife retained a residence in the Villa de Santa Fe, where both were still living in May 1626. By that time, he had received an appointment to the distinctive military post of *maese de campo* (field commander) of New Mexico. Politically, Durán y Chaves leaned toward the faction later known as “royalists,” those who favored the authority of the governors over the authority of the Franciscans in New Mexico. Although his two sons apparently followed in the same vein, both of them ran into conflicts with several governors.

Don Fernando Durán y Chaves remained a resident of the Villa de Santa Fe and married a daughter of Juan Vitoria Carvajal and Isabel Holguín. The murder of Gov. Luis de Rosas in 1642 involved several of Don Fernando’s in-laws. As a result, he and his brother, Don Pedro II, found themselves on the verge of losing their property, and their social and political clout diminished. Gov. Alonso Pacheco de Heredia confiscated their property in 1643 and declared them traitors by association, although they had not been involved in the murder of Rosas. The two brothers traveled all the way to Mexico City to present their complaint to royal officials, submitting a formal petition in November 1643. They were apparently successful in getting back what was taken.

Don Fernando, who died circa 1665, was the father of at least two sons, Agustín and Cristóbal. He may have also been the father of *sargento mayor* Fernando II Durán y Chaves, who owned land in the area of Taos Pueblo. The property of this Don Fernando is known today as Ranchos de Taos.

Don Pedro II Durán y Chaves married twice. The name of his first wife is not known. His second wife was Doña Elena Domínguez de Mendoza, a native of Mexico City and a daughter of Capt. Tomé Domínguez and Elena de la Cruz Mendoza, settlers of New Mexico. In the 1650s, Don Pedro II resided in Parral, a mining town and the main commercial trading center for goods from New Mexico, where he was apparently firmly involved in commercial trading. A record from Parral gives an idea of Don Pedro II’s significant investment in commerce. In December 1654 he was sued by a merchant of Parral, Francisco de Lima, for debt in the large amount of 1,565 pesos, or an estimated modern-day equivalent of about \$40,000.



Manuel Mariano Chávez, 1992—.

Don Pedro II returned to New Mexico, where his two known children married. His daughter, Isabel de Bohórquez, married *maese de campo* Juan Domínguez de Mendoza. This couple resided at their Estancia de Atrisco, now part of the Atrisco land grant and within the city limits of Albuquerque. His son, Fernando Durán y Chaves, married Lucía Hurtado, and this couple became the progenitors of the Chaves clan that settled first in the area of Bernalillo in 1695 and then were among the founders of the Villa de Albuquerque in 1706.

Descendants of the Durán y Chaves family still reside in Santa Fe today. One of these is City Councilman Miguel Chávez, who continues in the Chávez family tradition of public service.

Among the descendants of Pedro Gómez Durán y Chaves was Fray Angélico Chávez, priest, poet, historian and genealogical researcher. In addition to his seminal book on New Mexico Spanish colonial genealogy, *Origins of New Mexico Families*, he also wrote a book on the history of the Durán y Chaves family titled *Chávez: A Distinctive American Clan of New Mexico*. This book was out of print for many years but has been recently republished by Sunstone Press (2009) with a new foreword by historian Marc Simmons.

An updated genealogy and history of the Durán y Chaves family is part of the book *Aquí Se Comienza: A Genealogical History of the Founding Families of La Villa de San Felipe de Alburquerque* (New Mexico Genealogical Society, 2007).